

bomber from a sister ship was able to explode two torpedoes in the *Kalinin Bay's* wake about 100 yards astern, and the ship's 5-inch gun deflected another from a collision course with her stern.

Battered and bloody, the U.S. force sailed south, but there still would be little respite for the *Kalinin Bay* and her surviving sister ships. Little more than an hour later, at 1050, they came under concentrated attack from kamikaze aircraft, the suicide bombers of World War II. Four kamikazes dived at the *Kalinin Bay*. Two of the airplanes were shot down at close range. The third crashed into one side of the flight deck, damaging it badly. The fourth destroyed the aft port stack.

It was finally over by 1130 hours. The ships and planes of "Taffy 3," with some help from the planes of another unit, "Taffy 2", had cleared the air of enemy planes and had denied the powerful Japanese force entry into the Gulf of Leyte.

MacArthur's beachhead was safe.

The price had been high. Five of "Taffy 3's" 13 ships had been sunk—two carriers, a destroyer and two destroyer escorts. Hundreds of American sailors had died. The *Kalinin Bay* counted five dead among her 60 casualties, plus considerable structural damage.

During the hours of intense, furious fighting, the gunnery officer of the *Kalinin Bay* never wished he was back in that office in Chicago.

The *Kalinin Bay* managed to make it to New Guinea for temporary repairs. The ship was back in the States by late November and he transferred off as it awaited further work. Shipmates had died in several battles. He had been frightened at times and his faith in God had been tested. But he had come through without a scratch and with his faith stronger than ever.

"You realized your Christian faith was the most important thing you could have," he would say. "In combat I felt like I was sent there for a purpose. I felt like God's hand was holding me the whole time; I really did."

He was ready for his next assignment.

It was to the Midway, a much larger aircraft carrier that soon was to be commissioned at Newport News, VA. The idea was for the Midway to sail around the Horn and into the Pacific, where it would be a powerful additional force. By the time the Midway was commissioned September 10, 1945, that assignment was unnecessary. Gen. MacArthur had accepted Japan's unconditional surrender on September 2 aboard the Battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay. The war was over.

The Midway would have a lasting impact on his life, though. A fellow naval officer needed tickets to the commissioning ceremony for house guests, and he was glad to oblige. Among the guests he met the lovely young woman from Tuscaloosa who would become his wife.

They married shortly after he got out of the Navy. Duty done and a bit older, the young man who had loved his country so much that he was determined to fight for it turned his attention to a successful business career; helped raise two beautiful daughters, and became a highly respected community leader.

He became a stalwart of this church, a wise, practical leader who has given of himself, grown and thrived on his ability to seek and receive more insights. His faith has been unwavering, even during the painful ordeal of one daughter's untimely death.

People who know him will tell you he is a man of high intelligence, great character, impeccable integrity, calm consistency and complete credibility. They will also tell you he hard-working, caring, considerate, loyal

and a Southern gentleman in the best sense of that definition.

He's a man who still greatly loves his family and his hometown and the United States of America and what it stands for, what he fought for.

A patriot.

A man who reminds us in his modest, unassuming way that patriotism isn't some mysterious, exotic condition. It is simple and fundamental and powerful. It springs from fervent love for your country, love for freedom. It is in your heart and spirit and actions, just like it always has been in his.

This sanctuary hasn't lacked for patriots and heroes to sit in its pews to worship God over the decades. Many who fit that description are here today, as you are most Sundays.

I salute you. And I salute Harlan Meredith, who story I'm sure some of you recognized. I also thank him for his graciousness in sharing it with me, at my request, so I could share it with you today.

Incidentally, Harlan and Mary Anne have been married for 57 years now. That's worth a salute, too. Our church, community and country has been blessed to have people like Harlan, and you.

This, too, is a special time in our country's history. Again we are at war. Almost every day more of our soldiers pay the ultimate price for our country, leaving saddened survivors to live with the aftermath. It makes this Independence Day weekend all the more meaningful. I pray it also makes us all the more thankful for our blessings.

And the United States of America truly has been blessed these 227 years, perhaps most of all with the courageous, hard-working, God-loving people who have built and maintained this great country of liberty and justice. People who have been willing to sacrifice and fight for it, as so many continue to do today. Patriots.

We aren't perfect as a country. But to the extent mere humankind can be, the good part of the United States of America is both the light and the hope of the world. May God bless you; may God continue to bless America; and may we never forget from Whom our blessings flow.

I don't think Harlan Meredith ever has. ●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:41 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2754. An act making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2691. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

#### ENROLLED BILLS SIGNED

The message also announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bills:

S. 246. An act to provide that certain Bureau of Land Management land shall be held in trust for the Pueblo of Santa Clara and the Pueblo of San Ildefonso in the State of New Mexico.

H.R. 733. An act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, Oregon, for inclusion in Fort Vancouver Historic Site, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2330. An act to sanction the ruling Burmese military junta, to strengthen Burma's democratic forces and support and recognize the National League of Democracy as the legitimate representative of the Burmese people, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 2754. An act making appropriations for energy and water development for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2691. An act making appropriations for the Department of the Interior and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

#### MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1434. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to accelerate the increase in the refundability of the child tax credit, and for other purposes.

#### PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-221. A joint resolution adopted by the Assembly of the State of Nevada relative to payments for the detrimental effects of federally held lands in Nevada; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

#### ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, An average of 52 percent of the land in 13 western states is held by the Federal Government, while the Federal Government holds an average of only 4.1 percent of the land in the remaining 37 states; and

Whereas, In Nevada, approximately 87 percent of the land, which amounts to approximately 61 million acres, is held by the Federal Government; and

Whereas, In 15 of the 17 counties in Nevada, more than 50 percent of the land is held by the Federal Government, and in 4 of the 17 counties, more than 90 percent of the land is held by the Federal Government; and

Whereas, The management and control of such an extensive amount of the land in Nevada by the Federal Government has had substantial adverse effects on Nevadans; and

Whereas, When the Territory of Nevada was admitted to statehood on October 31, 1864, the Federal Government provided the newly admitted state with 2 sections of land in each township for the benefit of common schools, which amounted to 3.9 million acres, while other states that were subsequently admitted to statehood received 4 sections of land in each township for the benefit of common schools; and

Whereas, In 1880, it was necessary for Nevada to agree to exchange its 3.9 million acres for only 2 million acres of its own selection as Nevada had an immediate need for public school revenues and the land originally granted by the Federal Government to Nevada for common schools was not providing sufficient revenue because it included many undesirable sections that were on steep mountainsides or salt flats, the sections of the land could not be received from the Federal Government until they were surveyed and only a small fraction of the land had been surveyed and sold; and